

George Herbert Evans

George Herbert Evans was born in 1869 at Ontario, Canada. After local schooling he attended the Detroit College of Medicine and Surgery where he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1891. In that same year he commenced practice in San Francisco. He followed his profession continuously in that city until his retirement from active practice in 1933.

Early in his career he became interested in tuberculosis and, while engaged primarily in the private practice of internal medicine, he always took an active part in any tuberculosis work both locally in San Francisco and in California, or with the National Tuberculosis Association as well as international organizations.

He was a delegate to the International Tuberculosis Congress in Paris in 1905. One of the founders of the San Francisco Tuberculosis Association, he was also one of the original organizers of the first voluntary tuberculosis association of the State of California, now known as the California Tuberculosis and Health Association.

While Dr. Evans was helping to organize the fight against tuberculosis in the northern part of the state, Dr. Francis M. Pottenger was doing the same thing for Southern California. Over a period of many years they met at least monthly to discuss these and other affairs of mutual interest. In those days this required tedious train travel over a long week-end.

Dr. Evans was given charge of the so-called "Tuberculosis Colony" instituted by the San Francisco Department of Health in 1906. This marked the first attempt of the municipality at the isolation of the actively tuberculous. It started as a few tents in the old County Hospital grounds at Ingleside. Dr. Evans was very fond of telling the story of his first resident who came to him wondering where he would find the early cases they were hoping for that were considered treatable. Dr. Evans instructed this young physician to "go over to the General Hospital and look through the wards for patients that are coughing, examine their sputum for tubercle bacilli and you will find enough cases to fill all of our few beds." It turned out to be just that way.

In 1908, while President of the California Medical Association, he initiated the movement which resulted in the formation of the Citizen's Health Committee which effected control of the bubonic plague epidemic then current in San Francisco. For many years Dr. Evans was the oldest living Past President of the California Medical Association.

In 1913 he was appointed Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of California Medical School to organize a Department of Tuberculosis, and up to 1933 was actively engaged in teaching in that medical school through the wards of the San Francisco Hospital. He always approached

the disease tuberculosis as an important part of the field of internal medicine. His carefully prepared lectures to the junior and senior classes were meticulously given, usually at the bedside of a patient. Personal acquaintance with the pioneers of modern methods of tuberculosis treatment and a wide knowledge of existing institutions enabled him to illustrate and drive home a given point with an anecdote of a famous physician or a well known institution, which made his lectures alive and of great interest to the students. He took a real, human interest in the members of his classes and went far out of his way to do the helpful personal things that an older physician can for a neophyte, and also to instill the high ideals of the practice of medicine of which Dr. Evans was a shining personal example.

Dr. George Evans, together with Dr. Philip King Brown, feeling the need of a private institution for the care of their own tuberculosis patients and knowing the necessity of having the many meticulous details in treatment carried out under their personal direction and according to their own ideas, founded Alum Rock Sanatorium in the outskirts of San Jose. This has grown into a non-profit institution of wide service and usefulness and stands as another monument along his professional pathway.

Always active in medical society work, Dr. Evans was an ex-president of the San Francisco County Medical Society, the California Academy of Medicine, the California Tuberculosis Association, and the American Therapeutic Society. He was also a fellow of the American College of Physicians and American Medical Association.

After his retirement in 1933, he spent much of his time abroad in studies on tuberculosis, medical history, and housing. When World War II interrupted this, he continued these studies in and about San Francisco.

One of the fruits of these labors was the section on "The Early History of Tuberculosis in the State of California," for the California Tuberculosis Association, in which much interesting and some previously undisclosed facts were brought to light. During these years of retirement he served as a member of the Committee on Archives of the National Tuberculosis Association.

In April, 1947, jointly with Dr. Francis Pottenger, he was awarded the first of the Annual Medals of the California Tuberculosis and Health Association for outstanding achievement in the field of tuberculosis.

Dr. Evans died quietly from a cerebral hemorrhage on September 5, 1947. Thus ended the full life of an eminent physician, a contemporary of Osler, Koch and that group of pioneer physicians who opened up new eras in the field of tuberculosis.

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